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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/45/756)]

45/109. Computerization of criminal justice

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 44/72 of 8 December 1989, in which the question of computerization of criminal justice was addressed,

Recalling also resolution 9 of the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders 1/ on the development of crime and criminal justice information and statistical systems,

Recalling further Economic and Social Council resolution 1986/12 of 21 May 1986,

Bearing in mind the recommendations on the computerization of criminal justice administration contained in the report of the Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders on topic II, "Criminal justice policies in relation to problems of imprisonment, other penal sanctions and alternative measures", 2/ which emanated from the European Seminar on Computerization of Criminal Justice Information Systems: Realities, Methods, Prospects and Effects, held at Popowo, Poland, from 18 to 22 May 1987,

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1/ See Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Milan, 26 August-6 September 1985: report prepared by the Secretariat (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.86.IV.1), chap. I, sect. E.

2/ See A/CONF.144/IPM.4.

Aware that crime poses a serious problem for the personal security of individuals and for their enjoyment of human rights, thereby adversely affecting the quality of life and harming the development process,

Aware also that inefficiencies, inequalities or failures in the administration of criminal justice may themselves infringe on the rights and personal security of individuals,

Recognizing that the computerization of criminal justice administration is an important mechanism for the promotion of the efficient and humane management of criminal justice as long as the protection of privacy, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are taken into account,

Taking note with appreciation of the principles on the storage, use and protection of data enunciated in the final report of the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files, 3/

Recognizing that computerization of criminal justice is an important mechanism for the production of statistical information that would benefit national Governments and the international community by providing data on crime trends and the operation of criminal justice systems,

Recognizing also that the growth of crime nationally and internationally calls for enhanced international co-operation,

Noting that the European Seminar and the first United Nations workshop on the computerization of criminal justice information organized within the framework of the Eighth Congress offered a suitable opportunity to share experiences and establish viable policy options on this issue,

Conscious that the promotion of the computerization of criminal justice administration among Member States requires the enhancement of technical co-operation activities,

Emphasizing the common problems faced by all Member States in the administration and computerization of criminal justice, and the fact that both developing and developed countries may, through an enhanced capacity for an exchange of information on an international level, benefit from such international co-operation in the process of computerization,

Mindful that technical co-operation requires extensive expertise and resources and new logistical arrangements for the speedy delivery of services relating to the computerization of criminal justice administration,

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3/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/1988/22.

Noting with appreciation the draft directory of automated criminal justice information systems submitted by the Helsinki Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, to the first United Nations workshop on the computerization of criminal justice information,

1. Calls upon the Secretary-General, to the extent that the activities referred to in the present resolution cannot be undertaken within existing resources and with available expertise, to prepare proposals for submission to potential donors in the governmental, intergovernmental and private sectors, in possible consortium, for the provision of such funding and expertise; such proposals should include pilot projects to demonstrate the value and viability of such activities, and should serve as a basis for ensuring long-term resource support from diverse sources;

2. Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the network of United Nations institutes for the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, to strengthen the Global Crime and Criminal Justice Information Network by:

(a) Developing and distributing appropriate publications, reports and newsletters;

(b) Developing a directory of innovative programmes for the computerization of the administration of criminal justice;

(c) Organizing regional and interregional meetings, seminars and workshops on a continuing basis;

(d) Maintaining an up-to-date roster of individuals and organizations to form the basis of an international technical co-operation infrastructure;

(e) Enhancing communication between Member States by utilizing an electronic information network;

(f) Facilitating the exchange of criminal justice computer applications;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the network of United Nations institutes for the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders, to establish a technical co-operation programme for the systematization and computerization of criminal justice in order to offer training, assess needs, formulate and execute specific projects, and to report on the results achieved to the Ninth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to establish an international group of experts, which would be supported by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat, would report regularly to the Secretary-General, and would have interregional representation and responsibility for:

(a) Reviewing and assessing national experiences in the computerization of criminal justice;

(b) Overseeing the establishment of the technical co-operation programme;

(c) Monitoring the activities of the technical co-operation programme;

(d) Informing Member States of the potential availability of funds and services from various donors in the governmental, intergovernmental and private sectors;

(e) Informing such donors of the needs of Member States for assistance;

(f) Consulting with relevant experts in the private sector in the field of criminal justice;

5. Requests that adequate information on the experience of Member States with systematization and computerization should be included in the Global Crime and Criminal Justice Information Network and that the necessary facilities for the exchange of general substantive information between Member States should be provided in the Network;

6. Requests the Secretary-General and Member States to pay special attention to the developing countries in providing technical assistance and co-operation for the formulation of information programmes and statistics regarding crime and criminal justice;

7. Urges Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, specialized agencies and other bodies, including, in particular, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, and interested entities in the private sector with technical co-operation programmes, to consider giving high priority to criminal justice systematization and computerization projects in such programmes;

8. Also urges Member States to assist the Secretary-General in the funding of the Global Crime and Criminal Justice Information Network, the technical co-operation programme and the work of the international group of experts;

9. Requests the Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, in preparing the provisional agenda for the Ninth Congress, to consider including the question of the computerization of the administration of criminal justice as one of the items, and to consider also the organization of the second United Nations workshop on the computerization of criminal justice information within the framework of the Ninth Congress in order to allow for the sharing of experiences in technical co-operation among Member States and other interested parties on the improvement of the administration of criminal justice.

68th plenary meeting
14 December 1990